

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 20A

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
16 DECEMBER 1982

Nicaraguans warn Honduras on aid to rebels

By Oswaldo Bonilla
United Press International

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Nicaragua yesterday accused Honduras of aiding rightist commandos staging attacks across the border and warned that a "more open conflict" could erupt between the two countries.

A Foreign Ministry statement sent to Honduras and broadcast by radio stations here said "many wounded counterrevolutionaries" were being treated in Honduran hospitals.

"We only can call it open complicity by Honduran military and civilian authorities in the border zone," the statement said.

"They threaten to unleash a more open conflict, with consequences that cannot continue to be ignored."

The statement, signed by Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto and sent to Edgardo Paz Barnica, Honduras' foreign relations minister, said rightists had been retreating into Honduras after staging attacks on Nicaragua, which is ruled by a leftist junta.

"They regroup their forces in Honduras and prepare to launch new aggressions, with neither the Honduran military nor authorities of your illustrious government taking any steps to control and limit these criminals," the statement said.

The statement said there had been seven attacks recently by the rightists, the latest staged Monday near the Nicaraguan border hamlets of Cerro Nubarrones and Cerro de Jesus, both about 115 miles north of Managua.

The statement said the rightists suffered at least 26 casualties, while seven Nicaraguan soldiers were killed and 11 wounded in the two attacks.

Michael Ratner, director of the left-leaning U.S. National Lawyers Guild, said during a news conference here Tuesday that his 7,000-member group had filed a suit on behalf of Nicaraguans wounded in attacks allegedly backed by the United States.

Ratner, on a fact-finding mission to Nicaragua, said the suit was filed against President Reagan, CIA Director William Casey, U.S. Ambassador to Honduras John Negroponte and several other officials in Washington.

He said the suit, filed in federal district court in Washington, called for the United States to pay damages to Nicaraguans wounded by the rightists.

Nicaragua has accused the United States of funding the rightist guerrillas who operate out of camps in Honduras.